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VOLUME XXIV, No. 11

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 1931

WHOLE No. 648

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# The Classical Weekly

VOLUME XXIV, No. 11

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 1931

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## PROBLEMS IN TEACHING LATIN TO SELECTED GROUPS OF NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS<sup>1</sup>

In presenting for your consideration some problems connected with the teaching of elementary Latin, I do not presume to be able to offer anything new to such an association of experienced teachers. That the problems confronting the teacher of Latin in the modern School become more complex and baffling each year is well understood by all of us who are struggling to develop interest and enthusiasm in a subject for which the average ninth-grade pupil is so poorly prepared, both in language-sense and in proper attitudes toward study. The same difficulties exist for all of us in the usual classes with pupils of varying ability. My purpose, however, is to present to you some problems met in our School in working out an experiment with selected groups of superior students. I hope that they may be of interest because of their connection with the problems of third-year Latin and fourth-year Latin. The most alarming condition, as we see it at present, in the Latin departments of most modern High Schools is the small number of pupils continuing Latin beyond the second year. This fact makes it necessary in many of even our largest Schools to combine the classes in Cicero and the classes in Vergil. Because the time-saving plan we use in our School seems to solve the difficulty by bringing into the class in Cicero a larger proportion of most desirable pupils, we present it to you for your consideration.

Believing that children above the average in intelligence should have every opportunity the School affords, the vocational guidance department of our School selects, each term, a group of about thirty-five pupils from the new ninth-grade class to be kept together in English and in Latin for two or three terms. The selection is based upon a number of factors: the Intelligence Quotient, records of achievement in the Elementary School, age, health, and certain qualities of character. It has been found possible, by separating this group from slower pupils, to meet the maximum requirements of each course in Latin and in English, to do work of a superior quality, and to do it in less time than an average class requires. We complete, in English, three terms' work in two, in Latin, if not three terms in two, at least four terms in three. Also, in competition with others of equal or greater ability, these pupils develop a keener sense of responsibility for tasks assigned, acquire desirable mental habits, and, by saving a term in English and a term in Latin, enjoy opportunities for an enriched High School course.

In this experiment we have found peculiar problems, not anticipated. If great care is not taken in connection with them, the result for the pupils will be

chaos, unpleasant experiences, and an inevitable dislike of Latin. Let no one imagine that these selected groups require less skillful teaching than an average group requires. All the bad mental habits exhibited in any ninth-grade class are found here to a marked degree. Perhaps, because of the ease with which these children have done successful work in the past, excelling and outstripping their less gifted schoolmates, they have never known the necessity of effort and sustained attention. As a result they are inaccurate, impatient of detail, do not think clearly, do not attack work in an orderly way, jump at conclusions, have fleeting interests, and have very little sense of responsibility for doing assigned work regularly.

The following illustration will show a situation not unusual. Two ninth-grade classes, one the selected group, the other a very ordinary group, were directed to memorize the perfect passive participles of twenty-eight Latin verbs of the second, third, and fourth conjugations. The list was worked out in class before the pupils were required to memorize it. Connections were made with English derivatives as an aid to spelling; the selected group was much more alert and responsive in supplying derivatives and in noting similarities. The next day the ordinary class showed an average of five errors; the selected group showed seven. Teachers both of English and of mathematics bear witness to similar experiences when accuracy and thoroughness of preparation are being tested. Comparisons made between the two classes in the writing of sentences into Latin always showed that, while the ordinary class had more errors in syntax, the selected class showed more errors in spelling, numbers, and personal endings. These facts indicate on the part of the selected class a keener understanding, but a more careless attitude toward detail.

When we recognize that these children are really handicapped by their ingrained habits of carelessness, we realize the danger that is involved in any attempt to hurry their progress during the first term. It takes time to develop high standards of accuracy, to assume the responsibility of regular preparation, to learn to think and to work in an orderly way.

To make haste slowly is a wise policy at first. During the first term it is of paramount importance to have the children realize their bad mental habits and to feel the necessity of correcting them. This means teaching and testing over and over again. It demands all the skill and all the resources of the experienced teacher, employed in varied drill to maintain enthusiasm and interest and to avoid discouragement and unpleasant experiences. It becomes, to a certain extent, an individual matter. Papers marked to stress the nature of the errors (errors in forms are marked in red, errors in syntax in blue) and papers marked without grades

<sup>1</sup>This paper was read at the Twenty-fourth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, held at the Pennsylvania College for Women, Pittsburgh, May 16-17, 1930.

(but with comment on the improvement shown along definite lines), will arouse interest and guard against discouragement. Latin sentences and stories translated in class give abundant opportunity for keen competition if each pupil be required to stand until the accurate translation is given. This will train the pupils from the beginning in exact expression. While the matter of requiring, or accepting, translation for thought only is a controversial point, at least in these early terms we are justified in demanding accuracy, and are repaid for so doing. Whatever the method used may be, we aim to stress the need for orderly work and to stimulate a sense of pride and satisfaction in overcoming careless tendencies.

We find that these pupils become discouraged more easily than those of an average class. They have little perseverance in overcoming difficulties. When the members of the lower part of the class, put into competition with others of greater ability, are no longer conspicuous as leaders and are faced with the errors which are inevitable until they overcome their habits of inattention and careless procedure, they tend to become very sensitive and unhappy. This makes it necessary to use cautiously methods of drill which involve open competition in class. Many of these students, instead of being stimulated to greater effort by their failures, become disheartened. In the first few weeks tears flow easily. Such experiences have taught me to be very careful in making errors conspicuous. Selfconfidence must be maintained if there is to be pleasure in the study of Latin. If pupils are subjected to unpleasant experiences, they quickly dislike the study, lose their enthusiasm for it, and discontinue the subject so soon as they satisfy the minimum requirements. In these days of varied curricula, with the lure of easier courses, we teachers of Latin must be on the alert to hold the interest of those who are mentally fitted for the study of the Classics. With wise guidance and careful training, these selected pupils find pleasure in the study of Latin because it challenges their abilities and because they have learned the particular satisfaction of doing a hard thing well.

While these groups from which we hope to draw principally for our classes in Cicero and in Vergil need to expend most of their effort upon learning the fundamentals of the language, at the same time there must be developed a real interest in Roman history, and in Roman life and ideals as portrayed in the stories of the heroes of Rome, some recognition of the use of Latin in our every-day life, and enough word-study to enable the pupils to form the habit of making connections between English words and Latin words. There is no difficulty whatever in interesting these classes in stories of famous Romans, in pictures showing different phases of Roman life, and in finding original meanings of words assigned. The temptation is to use for such things more time than we can afford, because these pupils respond so eagerly to work of this sort and show so much originality and initiative in making their reports. I think this part of the work can be done successfully in an incidental way by means of pictures, by stories written for children, perhaps by an occasional play in

the class-room, and particularly by note-book reports on special topics assigned. I have these note-books handed in at regular intervals, have especially good reports read in class, comment on certain things found in other reports, and make suggestions for future reports. Private censure for careless or indifferent work is usually all that is necessary to spur on the less ambitious.

The real problem is to teach the fundamentals of Latin at an increased speed, without sacrificing the fine quality of work or the pleasure in the study of Latin that should be expected of children with superior mental capacities. Gain in time at the sacrifice of quantity or of quality is not to be considered. The purpose of gaining a term in English and a term in Latin is not to shorten the time spent in High School, but rather to afford opportunity for an enriched course. Surely it is undesirable to encourage pupils of twelve or thirteen (or even eleven) years of age to finish High School in less than four years. They will be handicapped in College by their immaturity. I think it wise to advise from the first against such ambitions, and to guard against the group being called a three-and-a-half-year class. The gain in time is of real service rather in making possible an enriched course which will be an asset to these talented boys and girls. In Pennsylvania there is a distinct advantage because of the heavy requirements in the social sciences (a year in the ninth grade and three terms in the eleventh and the twelfth years). Herein lies the difficulty in scheduling under normal conditions for classes in Cicero and in Vergil pupils who wish to take also advanced mathematics and a modern language. The two terms gained by these special classes provide time for all these subjects. These students elect Cicero as a matter of course. In the class beginning Cicero in February, 1930, only three dropped out, two of them at the advice of the teacher. The same class will lose but two in the next term—a very small loss compared to that of the usual class.

If we grant that the gain in time is desirable, we must ask next how it can be secured without making too heavy demands upon the student's time. For several reasons we must consider carefully the length of daily assignments. These children are at an age when they need exercise in the open air after School and need to get to bed at a rather early hour. To require much home work would certainly not meet with the approval of parents. The fact that children are talented means that they have and should have varied interests. They are interested in music, in athletics, and in clubs of various sorts, and they are called upon to take leading parts in all these extra-curricular activities. These activities, in moderation, are necessary for them if they are to become leaders in the School. Although age and varied interests make lengthy assignments impossible, it is necessary that there be home work. The necessity of study and a sense of responsibility for daily preparation must be emphasized from the first. Is it not reasonable to demand that forty-five minutes be an average time devoted to the preparation of a lesson in Latin during the ninth year? We, then, must be fair and measure our assignments accordingly.



Without lengthy assignments, we have gained time by organizing the work of the second and the third terms into units, using the vocabularies and the sentences of our text-book, but cutting and supplementing them as is necessary. Any attempt to hurry the work of the first term brings chaos and discouragement to a large number. The work of the second term can be done in two and a half months. It can be divided into the following units: third declension, pronouns, participles, infinitives, and comparison. The Reader used in this term gives abundant variety and also time for the assimilation of one unit of work before it is necessary to take up another. The regular course for our third term deals largely with dependent clauses, including clauses of purpose, clauses of result, indirect questions, *cum*-clauses, and substantive clauses. Along with this is a Reader which gives ample training in the translation of such constructions. We read Caesar in the fourth term. There is some difficulty in doing thoroughly the work of the third term in the last two and a half months of the ninth year. This work can be combined very successfully with the course in Caesar if the class is kept together and is assigned to the same teacher for the first term of the tenth year. More thorough drill in dependent clauses can be given in connection with the prose work of the course in Caesar. Since these pupils are being kept together in only one class in this third term, the supervising authorities of the School find it easy to assign this class to the teacher of Latin as a 'Report Class'. Though three terms' work can be done in two, the other arrangement, involving the doing of four terms in three, has proved more successful.

We have found this an interesting experiment, not only because of the problems we have had to meet and because of the opportunity it has offered to our Latin Department to interest the students who will especially profit by continuing the study of Latin, but also because we realize that to some extent these boys and girls of outstanding promise have had a better chance to acquire high ideals of scholarship and to develop the qualities of leadership which they possess. We feel that results have more than justified any effort involved in arranging and carrying out the program.

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SARAH F. BAKER

### THE RUSTIC FESTIVAL OF OSIRIS

The great festival of the religion of Isis in Graeco-Roman times was a dramatic portrayal of the Osiris-myth, in which the dismembered body of Osiris was sought and found by his divine consort. With his restoration to life a burst of joy succeeded the preceding days of mourning<sup>1</sup>.

According to Plutarch<sup>2</sup>, the day of the finding of Osiris, as celebrated in Egypt, was Athyr 19 in the Alexandrian calendar, corresponding to November 15 of the Julian reckoning. In the calendars of Roman festivals, however, two dates are given for the celebration. In the

Fasti Philocali, copied from the official calendar of the Empire, the Isia occupy October 28 to November 1; the last day was celebrated by chariot races in honor of Osiris<sup>3</sup>. Another type of calendar appears in the Menologia Rustica, which gives a selection of festivals observed by the farmers, along with astronomical and agricultural data for each month. Though the days on which the festivals fall are not indicated, the festivals are arranged in chronological order for each month. Here the Heuresis (i. e. Finding of Osiris) follows the Epulum Iovis of November 13<sup>4</sup>.

Mommsen<sup>5</sup> offers a conjectural explanation of this conflict of dates which Wissowa accepts as 'brilliant and convincing'.<sup>6</sup> There were, Mommsen points out, two forms of the Egyptian calendar. The older gave 365 days to the year, a period approximately a quarter of a day shorter than the solar year. In this calendar a fixed festival would in four years come one day earlier in the solar year, and the process would continue so that in 1460 years the festival would have traversed all the seasons and would have returned to its starting-point. An attempt was made by the Hellenistic rulers to reform the calendar by the intercalation of a day every fourth year and thus to fix the months in their proper seasons. The reformation was completed, in fact, by the Romans, in the time of Augustus<sup>7</sup>. The resurrection of Osiris was thus fixed at the date indicated by Plutarch (Athyr 19 = November 15), with which the Menologia is in agreement. But the date given by the official Fasti (October 31, or thereabouts) can be explained only as derived from the ancient moveable Egyptian calendar. Athyr 19 corresponded to October 31 in 37-39 A. D., the very period, probably, when the Egyptian rites were introduced into the official Roman calendar by the Emperor Caligula. Hence it would appear that the date of the Isia was derived from the fact that the festival of the moveable Egyptian calendar fell on October 31 at the time of the borrowing.

One other account of the festival which affords evidence concerning its date appears not to have been considered. In the fifth century a Gallic noble, Rutilius Namatianus, while he was returning home from Rome, witnessed a festal celebration of the resurrected Osiris (*renovatus Osiris*) by the peasants of Faleria in Etruria. The year was 1169 A. U. C.<sup>8</sup>, or 416 A. D. He left Rome when the sun in Libra had lengthened the night (i. e. September 21, or later)<sup>9</sup>, and tarried at the mouth of the Tiber fifteen days, until the new moon brought fair weather<sup>10</sup>. The new moon fell that year on October 8<sup>11</sup>. He then proceeded by boat; he

<sup>1</sup>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum 1<sup>2</sup>, pages 274, 276.

<sup>2</sup>G. Wissowa, *Römische Bauernkalender*, Apophoreton Ueberreicht von der Graeca Halensis, 46-47 (Berlin, Weidmann, 1903), Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum 1<sup>2</sup>, page 281.

<sup>3</sup>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum 1<sup>2</sup>, pages 333-334.

<sup>4</sup>Wissowa (as cited in note 1, above), page 353.

<sup>5</sup>Sir James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 6.27-29 (London, Macmillan, 1914). The corrected, or 'Alexandrian', calendar was introduced, according to different chronologists, in 30 B. C., or in 26 B. C. Frazer (95) states his belief that after that time the festival of the resurrection of Osiris was regularly celebrated on Athyr 19 (= November 15). This would leave no reason apparent why the Roman calendar should fix the Isia on October 31.

<sup>6</sup>Rutilius Namatianus 1.135-136. <sup>7</sup>*Ibidem*, 1.183-184.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibidem*, 1.205-206.

<sup>9</sup>C. H. Keene, *Rutilii Claudii Namatiani De Reditu Suo Libri II*, 9 (London, Bell, 1907), has verified the date determined by Zumpt.

<sup>10</sup>G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, 354, note 2 (Munich, Beck, 1912).

<sup>11</sup>De Iside et Osiride 39; Wissowa (as cited in note 1, above), page 353.

stopped on shore each night. He gives us a diary of each day's journey. His first day's journey was evidently on October 8 or October 9; the fourth day, on which he found the festival of Osiris in progress, was either October 11 or October 12. Thus we find a third date for the festival, differing by some three to five weeks from those heretofore considered.

An explanation may be sought in the connection, stated by Rutilius<sup>12</sup>, between the festival and the recent sowing of the crops:

et tum forte hilares per compita rustica pagi  
mulcebant sacris pectora fessa iocis.  
Illo quippe die tandem renovatus Osiris  
excitat in fruges germina laeta novas.

Though the regular sowing of wheat was in November, an earlier or a later date might be chosen according to the climate or the season. Barley might be sown at any time after the equinox<sup>13</sup>. The sowing in this locality had evidently taken place early in October, and the rites of Osiris followed immediately; they afforded diversion to the tired farmers, while the god lent his aid in giving life to the seed. The variable time of the sowing thus seems to determine the time of the festival.

Other festivals of the farmer's year were of this moveable sort. The date of the *Feriae Sementivae* was not fixed, but came in January when the fields were teeming with the new vegetation<sup>14</sup>. Similar considerations explain the variable date of the *Ambarvalia*, the *Florifertum*, the *Augurium Canarium*, and perhaps of other forgotten *Feriae Conceptivae*<sup>15</sup>.

Nor have we any reason to suppose that the November celebration of the *Menologia Rustica* was of fixed date. The entry *HEVRESIS* along with *SEMENTES TRITICARIAE ET HORDEARIAE* is made under November for the reason that the sowing normally occurred in that month. Other moveable festivals are similarly entered under the month in which they usually fell. Thus the *Compitalia* is set in January (*SACRIFICANT DIS PENATIBUS*), and the lustration of the fields in May (*SEGETES LUSTRANTUR*), though this latter was sometimes celebrated in June<sup>16</sup>.

Since the Resurrection of Osiris was celebrated by peasants, now in November, now in October, it must be concluded that the feast was among the *Feriae Conceptivae*, not, as Mommsen conjectured, fixed on November 15. Again, since the urban *Isia* was fixed, while the rustic *Heuresis* was moveable, the two festivals are to be distinguished. City-dwellers would have no direct interest in the seasonal duties of the farm, but the worship of Isis, with its splendid ritual and promise of immortality, might interest them. The rural celebration, however, was connected in time and in purpose with the sowing and the germination of seed-crops; it doubtless preserved the original meaning of the myth of Osiris's death and resurrection<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup>Rutilius Namatianus 1.373-376.

<sup>13</sup>Vergil, *Georgics* 1.208-211, 219-226; Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 18.202-206.

<sup>14</sup>Ovid, *Fasti* 1.657-662.

<sup>15</sup>Wisowa (as cited in note 1, above), page 440.

<sup>16</sup>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum 9.1618; Wisowa (as cited in note 4, above), page 46, note 1.

<sup>17</sup>Fraser, *Golden Bough*<sup>3</sup>, 6.96-107.

## REVIEW

Why Rome Fell. By Edward Lucas White. New York and London: Harper and Brothers (1927). Pp. x + 364. 6 Maps<sup>1</sup>.

In these days of highly specialized knowledge the writing of ancient history is a serious business. Only the man who combines insight with scholarly mastery of detail can rewrite with authority the account of the history of the ancient peoples or describe once more their culture. Intimate knowledge of sources, incessant criticism of one's own work as well as that of one's predecessors, and freedom from bias<sup>1a</sup> are requisite to the man who would produce an authoritative as well as a new or interesting book.

Mr. Edward Lucas White, the author of the volume under review, *Why Rome Fell*, is a teacher of Latin, as well as a distinguished novelist<sup>2</sup> whose pictures of the life of antiquity have with reason become popular. The reviewer found his *Andivius Hedulio* irresistible and still thinks that the 'average reader' who has no Latin or Greek will find in this fascinating tale one of the best introductions to the social life of the Romans under the Empire. Mr. White's combination of imaginative power and vigorous style enables him to visualize with unusual clearness and to present with conviction pictures of ancient people in the occupations of daily life<sup>3</sup>. But these qualities are not exactly those of a successful historian, especially when they are coupled with headlong enthusiasm, by means of which the writer of fiction may carry his reader with him, but which in the writer of serious history always arouses suspicion. A still greater handicap in connection with the book under review is the fact that Mr. White had an axe to grind; that his volume is a 'Tendenzschrift' is indicated at the outset by a remarkable dedication:

To the memory of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1794, the greatest modern historian, who knew most of what is herein set forth in Chapters XVI-XXIX, and who might have set most of it forth cogently in plain words, but who dared not risk the probable consequences to himself in his days, and so, in his famous fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, had to wrap up his meaning in vague verbiage, or deal in generalities, or shelter himself behind mere suggestions, hints or innuendoes, this book is admirably dedicated.

It is, then, as novelist, stylist, student and teacher of ancient life and manners, and, finally, enthusiastic protagonist of freedom of speech, that Mr. White

<sup>1</sup>The delay in the publication of this review is in no sense due to Professor Kraemer. I am myself to blame in part, but in part only, for the delay. The main responsibility rests with the abnormal circumstances under which, for the past five years, I have carried on all my work. C. K. >

<sup>1a</sup>That this is one of the most difficult tasks of the historian can be seen from the recent admirable work of Michael Rostovtzeff, *History of the Ancient World: Volume I, The Orient and Greece; Volume II, Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1926, 1927). See my review of Volume 2, in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 22.134, where I point out that, free as this author is from prejudice, nevertheless his fundamental conception of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire rests upon a criticism not of ancient society at all, but of modern society.

<sup>2</sup>His works include *Narrative Lyrics* (1908); *El Supremo* (1916); *The Unwilling Vestal* (1918); *The Song of the Sirens and Other Stories* (1919); *Andivius Hedulio* (1921); *Helen* (1925); *Lukundoo and Other Stories* (1927).

<sup>3</sup>This ability to imagine and to portray is well illustrated in his latest volume of short stories (*Lukundoo and Other Stories*). The themes treated are of an unusual, 'creepy' character, but the author has still the power of lending probability to them.

proposes his solution of the time-worn problem: What were the causes of the fall of Rome? More than half of his volume is introductory, an attempt to explain the rise and the development of Mediterranean civilization. The book begins, far afield, with a survey of General Conditions on the Great Continent of Europe and Asia (Chapters I-II, 1-25) and General Conditions in the Mediterranean World (Chapter III: 26-36), after which conditions in the Italian peninsula are similarly treated (Chapter IV: 37-45). Then follows a discussion of the early history of the city of Rome (Chapters V-VII: 46-88). The first pre-Christian century is then handled, with all the fullness of detail which is perhaps natural in a man who has spent years teaching the chief authors of this period, and who has developed a sort of personal fondness for the individuals who thrived in it; the account comprises six chapters (VIII-XIII: 89-153), or almost a fifth of the whole book. With two concluding chapters this introductory section of the volume closes. The first (XIV: 154-169) gives a survey of the Empire; the second (XV: 170-190) presents a summary of Rome's achievements.

The second portion of the work begins with a long and very interesting account of polytheism in the Greco-Roman world (Chapters XVI-XVIII: 191-229), which leads into a glowing exposition of the tenets of Greco-Roman paganism (Chapters XIX-XX: 230-259). Then, finally, we come to the real matter in hand. Chapters XXI-XXIV (260-295) deal with the causes of the fall of Rome, catalogued and discussed in significantly chiasmic order: (a) the paramount external cause<sup>1</sup>, (b) contributory external causes<sup>2</sup>, (c) contributory internal causes<sup>3</sup>, and (d) the paramount internal cause<sup>4</sup>. Chapters XXV-XXVII present in full the charge against Christianity (296-339). The work concludes with a summary (Chapter XXVIII: 340-345), and a chapter (XXIX: 346-362) entitled *What the World Has Lost by the Fall of Rome*.

Before discussing the polemic element in this book, it will be worth our while to examine Mr. White's method of handling the usual historical material. He has, as I pointed out above, an unusual knack of vivifying the social life of the ancients. One might choose almost at random, but here is a sample (185-186):

During the period of the germination and burgeoning

<sup>1</sup>The bizarre character of the list of causes may be judged from the description of this first cause. As it is generally phrased in textbooks, the idea is simple: Mongolian pressure upon the European barbarians brought about the fall of Rome. Mr. White, with his inability to resist the colorful, finds this cause to be "the progressive-desiccation of Central Asia". He goes on thus (262): "... It should be noted and cannot be too much insisted on that the effect on the Mediterranean world... was progressively intensified. The pressure from the steppes outward, southward and southwestward, was more powerful in 400 B. C. than it had been in 1200 B. C. and more powerful in A. D. 400 than it had been in 400 B. C. So of any two dates at any considerable interval". So (266) "... about A. D. 1200, they < = the steppes > sent forth the perfectly manned, perfectly equipped, perfectly led armies which owed allegiance to Jenghiz Khan..." and so, we must assume, the steppes in 2000 A. D. will "blow the lid off" once more. To speak of regular periodic outbreaks of nomads is inaccurate enough, but to conceive of the leadership as "progressively better and better" is more than "mere conjecture" (266)—it is nonsense.

<sup>2</sup>These are, on the surface, four in number, but boil down in actuality to the idea of "progressive" Mongolian pressure.

<sup>3</sup>There are no less than fourteen of these, poorly assorted and arranged. A little more careful analysis would have reduced the number by more than half.

<sup>4</sup>"The weakening of military and civic morale by the spread of Christianity" (262). Of this I shall speak in detail later.

of the Mediterranean civilization soap was unknown. The populations of the Mediterranean world were of a cleanly disposition and, not yet having learned how to saponify the greasy film on a dirty human body, they steamed or sweated themselves clean. The primitive apparatus consisted of a small cell, barely large enough to accommodate the bather, a jar of water, a dipper, and a pan of pebbles heated red hot over a brazier and carried into the cell by a slave, who closed the door on the naked bather, who then poured a dipper of water on the pebbles and was at once enveloped in steam, and repeated the process until steamed enough.

Often the bather stood, often sat on a stool. Various devices, usually a hole in the door, fitting the bather's face, saved the bather from suffocation in the steam. Out of these beginnings developed countless cheap bath houses of the Roman Empire, to which, in every town, any man or woman could resort for a fee absurdly trifling and enjoy and be refreshed by a cold shower, a cold plunge, a tepid shower, a tepid plunge, a steam bath (what we call a Russian bath), a hot, dry, sweat bath (what we call a Turkish bath), or any combination of these in any order preferred.

Out of these in turn developed the Roman Thermae (hot baths), which were institutions more or less analogous to our country clubs, casinos, and suchlike, places where the aristocracy of a town or city gathered for pleasure, diversion, and amusement, bathing being a pleasure mightily relished by the upper classes.

The author is at his best when he deals with the concerns of ordinary people, and attempts to reconstruct, imaginatively rather than from the monuments, the course of their daily lives. Moreover, he is always clear. His anxiety to have the reader follow his every point invites him, in fact, to prolixity—one of the signs of a successful teacher. As an example of this striving for clarity I may mention the simple, intelligible maps, which make no effort to show all the details, and are not less valuable because of their popular appeal.

But this, I regret to say, is all. For the rest is not history, but autobiography. "From the time I was a half-grown lad", says Mr. White, in an Afterword (363-364), which should be read before one begins to read the book proper, "... I have wanted to write a book on this theme and of such scope as this. ... That is the sort of book I have written, very easily, for I have been saturated with the subject since childhood. ... The interest in this work lies not so much in Roman history as in Mr. White's convictions about Roman history. It is only fair to admit that these convictions make very good reading indeed, and that the author's definition of history is probably more inclusive than the reviewer's. Mr. White's special interests dominate his selection of material. Thus his particular fondness for the under dog is responsible for a whole chapter (101-108) on the slave question and the servile wars, whereas the political history of the Empire has little attraction for him and is jammed in the most perfunctory fashion into another chapter (154-169)<sup>5</sup>. It is

<sup>5</sup>This takes in the entire period from 29 B. C. to 476 A. D. Naturally it is a mere digest of the account in some encyclopedia. I find it difficult to understand how, in view of his interest in the fall of Rome, the author justified to himself the omission of any serious discussion of the period after Augustus. To make room for such discussion, the exaggerated emphasis upon the Republic should have been reduced, and the three preliminary chapters on conditions in Asia and Europe should have been cut to one, or, if my view of their importance is correct, have been omitted entirely. Even as it is, the story of imperial history, which devotes three of its fifteen pages to the years 68-69 alone, runs thinner and thinner toward the end, until it concludes in a mixed metaphor (160): "... the Empire was fairly well maintained until A. D. 378. After A. D. 381 it rapidly crumbled and had evaporated by A. D. 476".



because of special interest that the chapter on The Early Romans (55-69) is so extensive and that it deals so exclusively with conditions in the army. But this chapter, which for vividness and interest it would be hard to improve, is counterbalanced by the next, a lackadaisical chapter on The Rise of Rome (70-88). The story of the conquest of Italy is inadequate; that of the relations of Rome and the East is unusually poor. This latter period, most important in any discussion of the development of Rome, is dismissed with less than two pages (86-87), while seven pages fall to Hannibal and the Second Punic War alone. Proportions such as these indicate the enthusiasm of the author. He finds it next to impossible to resist digressions or to refrain from making special collections of facts and including them in his narrative, regardless of proportion or, sometimes, of relevance<sup>9</sup>.

Just as his special interests are responsible for these errors in proportion, so his love of vividness and color frequently detracts from the trustworthiness of his narrative. His cavalier treatment of the Gracchi may be quoted as an example of this striving for effect. Everything that he has to say about the agitation of these brothers is comprised in the following sentences (91):

... The first and perhaps the most notable of the long series of such demagogues were the two brothers Tiberius Gracchus and Gaius Gracchus. They were well-born, handsome, gracious, ingratiating, high-minded, well-intentioned, plausible, and eloquent doctrinaire fanatics. Dishonest and boorish demagogues are far less dangerous and pernicious.

For twelve years the two, in succession, kept Rome in turmoil and uproar. A riot is actually a sort of informal and unorganized ephemeral civil war. The proposals and popularity of these two fascinating and impractical brothers led to more than one riot. By 120 B. C. both were safely dead.

Mr. White's love of violent contrasts comes out in a similarly exaggerated passage about Marius (96), and his popular, almost jaunty, treatment of Caesar (134-136) will illustrate his fondness for retelling a familiar story in strikingly new terms. This is too long to quote. But Mr. White's style may be illustrated by the following extract (205) from an account of the Roman religious system:

Jupiter was conceived of as chief partner and the permanent head of the Firm of Senate, People and Company of Rome, Italy, in the War-business. The gods collectively were conceived of as a permanent board of directors, each supervising his or her special department. The Magistrates were conceived of as a sort of board of shop-foremen to ascertain the will of the gods and the wishes of the mass of the citizens and to evolve from them workable policies. The Senate was conceived of as a sort of shop-council of veteran experts whose chief duty was to advise any magistrate perplexed as to any point of policy.

The imagination which Mr. White possesses to so astonishing a degree is, as I have suggested above, of

<sup>9</sup>So, for instance, half a page (64) goes to show that the Romans had no national flag, but used S.P.Q.R. instead; three pages (112-115) are given over to piracy. Many of the digressions betray a purely philological interest: e.g. a short paragraph (69) on the etymology of *bellum*, and another on *imperator*, in which the old form *induperator* is defined by giving no fewer than five equivalent English expressions. Mr. White's approach is popular rather than scientific; compare his acceptance (72) of the old derivation of *municipium* from *munus capere*.

more help to him as a novelist than as a historian. In fact, it must be said that Mr. White has not the temper of a historian at all. He visualizes too strongly, and is too readily susceptible to emotional appeal. Where, as a result, he draws upon his imagination in reconstructing Roman life and thought, his accounts, although they seem at first reading most valuable, on examination prove to be unreliable or at least suspicious. Such are, for instance, the explanation of the *spolia opima* (40-42), of Romulus and Remus (46-47), of early Latium (55-56), of the Roman soldier (58-60), of the utter callousness of the Romans to the feelings of their slaves (104-105)<sup>10</sup>, etc. His very style is unique and to the highest degree personal. Nervous, impatient and prolix, it is guilty of awkwardness of construction<sup>11</sup>, unusual phraseology<sup>12</sup>, 'literary' sentences betraying the hand of the novelist<sup>13</sup>, fondness for exaggeration<sup>14</sup> and redundancy<sup>15</sup>. But especially characteristic (and annoying) is a habit of piling up strings of epithets and substantives, a trick of style conducive frequently of vividness, but more often simply of verbosity<sup>16</sup>.

This, then, is the author who discusses the problem, Why Rome Fell. Add to his other disadvantages a persistent, boastful, even unscrupulous animus against Christianity, and one can readily foresee his conclusion that the Christians were chiefly responsible for the grand debacle. His analysis of all the causes of the fall of Rome, carefully listed, even catalogued with letter and number, seems on the surface to be exhaustive and impartial. But one idea is dominant throughout: the real cause was the failure of the early Christians to see the value of paganism, or rather the despicable means by which they succeeded in dominating the gentler adherents of the traditional faith. Mr. White is an enthusiastic pagan. It would be hard to imagine even a confessed religious believer in the

<sup>10</sup>On page 105 we read: "... The run of slave-owners in the Roman world no more considered the comfort of their slaves than the run of American farmers consider the comfort of their hogs, and fed them no more judiciously or generously than the run of American farmers feed their farm animals. ... They were habitually struck, beaten, lashed, and scourged for even such small faults as laziness, slowness, or inattention, and unmercifully for blunders, disobedience, contumacy, theft, or worse delinquencies. ... A cow is not expected nor permitted to have a will of her own about anything; nor was the slave girl of any Mediterranean slave owner, Roman or what else. ..."

<sup>11</sup>"By 800 B.C. or not much later, while much of Italy was cultivated, much as yet forested, and not only were wild boars and deer still abundant, but there were still far too many bears and wolves for the comfort of the human inhabitants. ... (45); "Italy, while far from safe for human beings, was less unsafe" (45).  
<sup>12</sup>Compare e.g. "worsening" (91); "disrelished" (93); an intransitive use of "accentuate" (111), etc.

<sup>13</sup>Here is an extract from one of the better passages (28): "... The typical Greek city, and there were many such, possessed a small valley, more or less wedge-shaped, though mostly resembling a wedge bent, twisted, and jagged, the two long sides defined by mountain ridges, its butt along the seashore, with limits marked by surf-thumped headlands. ..."

<sup>14</sup>Compare the following on the destruction of Carthage (87): "The ruthlessness of the Romans has so horrified modern historians that few set forth how sagacious, farsighted, judicious, logical, and sensible was this grim decision. ..."

<sup>15</sup>E.g. (202), "... the modern Chinese, our present-day contemporaries. ..."

<sup>16</sup>Compare e.g. "Returned to Rome, Augustus displayed powers of self-possession, self-command, self-control, self-confidence, intelligence, tactfulness, acumen, insight, foresight, wariness, discretion, caution and wisdom downright miraculous in a mere lad" (138); "... This powerfully tended to abate, even to efface, any lingering resentment, rancor, vindictiveness, animosity, enmity, disaffection and pique" (219); "... wherefore it was the duty of all pious Christians to burn, pollute, maltreat, gut, deface, mar, maul, batter, dismantle, wreck, shatter, demolish, and annihilate all such edifices <pagan temples>, with their contents" (330). Almost every page furnishes examples of this synonymic orgy.



time of Cato advocating more thoroughly the merits of the Olympian system than does this modern. Moreover, he is equally as convinced<sup>17</sup> of the "grandeur that was Rome": his last chapter<sup>18</sup> is a detailed summary of the accomplishments, chiefly literary and artistic, of the Romans. The moral, then, is syllogistically obvious. The greatness of Rome was due primarily to her firm faith in polytheism<sup>19</sup>; Christianity destroyed polytheism: therefore Christianity destroyed the greatness of Rome. But upon the greatness of Rome depended her achievements and her superb legacy to the modern world; therefore Christianity is to be detested for its stultifying influence on modern culture.

The theme that the Christians were responsible for the fall of the Roman Empire begins early in the volume to receive its development. After the direct statement to that effect in the third paragraph of the Introduction, it appears first by the literary device of negating its opposite: the pagan Romans are depicted (188) as

a hard-headed, level-headed and practical breed, singularly free from false conceptions or from any tendency toward them. They had both feet on the ground and their heads out of the clouds.

At the basis of all the grandeur of Rome is the belief in the gods (191):

...the preponderant factor among those which brought about Rome's progress, invincibility, grandeur, and supremacy was the religion of the Romans and its relation to their scheme of government and of their government to their religion. That was what made the Romans' miraculous achievements possible and actual.

This theme recurs until it is presented in full form in the brilliant<sup>19</sup> exposition of pagan religious belief (Chapters XVI-XXI), of which the fundamental principles were, according to Mr. White, subordination of the individual to the State, polytheism, Emperor worship, State enforcement of piety<sup>20</sup>. Into this

<sup>17</sup>Compare these statements (100): "The Romans did export from Rome in exchange for their imports full value and overvalue. For more than four centuries they exported brains, the best brains in the world, the best brains the world had ever known".

<sup>18</sup>Chapter 20, What the World Lost by the Fall of Rome (346-362). The attitude is similar to that taken toward America by Andrew Carnegie in *Triumph of Democracy, Sixty Years' March of the Republic* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912). In answer to a criticism that the book was too exclusively laudatory, Mr. Carnegie replied (Preface, v), "My dear Friend, *Triumph of Democracy* was written at high noon, when the blazing sun right overhead casts no shadows". Later (vi) he says: "This book is not intended either to describe or dilate upon the spots upon our national sun. It is written by a grateful and intense admirer of the Republic, its institutions, and its people".

<sup>19</sup>That Mr. White's assumption of the universal polytheism of the ancient world may not be accepted by all his readers is indicated by a comment of R. G. Collingwood, in a review of Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (Antiquity 1 [1927], 315): "Similarly, he asserts more than once that the classical mind was essentially polytheistic, and opposes to it 'Magian monotheism' (p. 404), that is, alleges that monotheism is characteristic of the Arabian culture that filled the first millennium of our era. But this is, once more, inaccurate. All the Greek philosophers, until the decadence, were monotheists; and Spengler knows that philosophy is only a reasoned statement of ideas common to the culture. The monotheism of the philosophers can only indicate a profound strain of monotheism in the whole Greco-Roman world. And indeed Spengler himself would recognize that strain (for its existence is notorious enough) did not his faulty logic compel him to ignore it in the interests of his morphology".

<sup>20</sup>None the less so for its inaccuracies and its exaggerations, e.g. the assertion of the universal acceptance of the divinity of Caesar (239-242) by his contemporaries and by Caesar himself.

<sup>21</sup>This should be given in Mr. White's own words (259): "... what cemented every prosperous community of the Mediterranean pagan world was the universal instinctive conviction of and belief in the tenets: (1) That the individual existed for the state and not the state for the individual. (2) That the partnership of the all-powerful, kindly and helpful gods was the chief asset of each state and their favor its most precious possession.... (3) That Rome's

idyllic world the Christians came, ignoring the substantial merits of the traditional system and breaking down the resistance of the simple pagans by offering them superior but specious advantages. Mr. White's explanation of this victory (299-301) as a 'sort of jugglery of superstitions and taboos, in which the more novel and debased ends on top<sup>21</sup>, is so ingenious, so racy, that it must be read to be appreciated. The unwary reader, especially if he has a leaning toward scandal, may even find himself believing in the delightful fiction. For fiction it is, and spicy, in the modern manner. To Mr. White the motives of the early converts were utterly sordid (302):

The tale of the penitent thief on Calvary and the dogma of the efficacy of deathbed repentance appealed powerfully to professional criminals. One might be a sneak thief or a highway robber all one's life and, by a sincere deathbed repentance, might escape hell and win eternal bliss in heaven if one were a Christian from long beforehand. Of course a Christian was obliged to refrain from thieving and robbery, but temptation was a valid excuse, the flesh was weak, and a genuine, heartfelt repentance cost nothing and wiped out all the effects of past sinfulness, hypocrisies, and sins.

The reviewer has no intention of writing an apology for the early Christians. It would be, moreover, unnecessary, for the frankly biased attitude of the author and the bitterness of his attack will rouse enough champions for the traditional faith.

In conclusion, I must express regret at having to damn so completely a work undertaken with every evidence of sincere conviction and written under particularly trying circumstances. At the same time, I feel it necessary to warn the unsuspecting reader of the pernicious character of this book. As a weapon in the hands of the careless or the unscrupulous it will do much more harm than its vivid and imaginative style will do good. It has seemed to me that someone must say with a conviction equal to that of the writer, simply, 'This is not so'. Those of my readers who have had the good fortune of meeting Mr. White or even of hearing him talk will understand my reluctance in expressing the regret that this book ever was written.

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## CLASSICAL ARTICLES IN NON-CLASSICAL PERIODICALS

### VI

Preussische Jahrbücher—October, Die Olympischen Götter: Aus Anlass des Buches von Walter F. Otto, Die Götter Griechenlands, Albrecht Schaeffer.

Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society—Number 6 (1930), Vergil After Two Thousand Years, John C. Rolfe.

Quarterly Journal of Speech—November, The Rhetorical Importance of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, John

prosperity was assured by the leadership of a demigod who had been indubitably proclaimed as Jupiter's choice as his representative on earth. (4) That the Prince of the Commonwealth would see to it that Rome's gods were properly revered, invoked, conciliated, and thanked".

<sup>21</sup>On the numismatic principle that the coin of lower standard drives out the higher!

- Emperor ["for two reasons in particular his place is, I think, an important one. First, of the epic poets of the Silver Age he is the most interesting and most representative; secondly, among his highly rhetorical poetical contemporaries he stands preëminent for his rhetorical powers". The *Pharsalia* is rhetorical both in intent and in form].
- Review of English Studies—October, Review, generally favorable, by Denis Saurat, of Walter Mackellar, *The Latin Poems of John Milton*; Review, mildly favorable, by Denis Saurat, of Kathleen E. Hartwell, *Lactantius and Milton*.
- Revue des Deux Mondes—October 1, Virgile chez Petrarque, Pierre de Nolhac [Petrarch admired Vergil with the instinctive sympathy of a writer who feels himself to be of the same intellectual family; he honored him with considerable pride as the great spirit of his race and the most illustrious interpreter of the glory of Rome]; October 15, Sur la Danse Grecque, Robert Demangel.
- Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France—January-March, M<sup>é</sup>rimée et César, Y. Bequignon.
- Revue de l'Histoire des Religions—July-August, L'Éleusinisme et la Disgrâce des Danaïdes, Ch. Picard.
- Revue des Questions Historiques—July, Chronique d'Histoire Ancienne Grecque et Romaine: L'Année 1929, Maurice Besnier.
- Saturday Review of Literature—October 4, Review, favorable, by Anne C. E. Allinson, of Dorothy Brooke, *Private Letters: Pagan and Christian*; October 25, Salute to Virgil, E. K. Rand [this essay contains, besides a biographical sketch of Vergil, the substance of the author's article entitled Virgil the Magician, in the October number of *The Classical Journal*].
- Sewanee Review—October-December, Roman Virgil, H. M. Gass [this essay is devoted chiefly to a literary appreciation of Vergil's poetry. "Virgil is truly a classic, in the sense that classicism is the health of art in which romanticism, realism, idealism and all the other humors that flow in the human spirit are found in their proper balance and proportion"].
- Yale University Library Gazette—April, The *Principes* Tacitus, Clarence W. Mendell [a sketch of the Tacitean manuscript tradition and a description of a copy of the *editio princeps*, published at Venice about 1470, recently acquired by Yale University].
- Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie—August, *Inter . . . et* und Seine Fortsetzungen in den Romanischen Sprachen, Theodor Heinermann.

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